

**Thomas Jefferson to William Short, August 29,
1808, from Thomas Jefferson and William Short
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

Thomas Jefferson to William Short

Monticello Aug. 29. 08

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 7th & 10th inst. were acknowledged in mine of the 19th. Mr. Madison is now with me and is preparing instructions for you. We now very much wish we had asked you to take a ship here. It is impossible to give on paper so intimate an expression of our views as in conversation and more difficult in this case than in others because in addition to the general objects of cultivating friendship and declaring our purpose by observing neutrality, which can be put on paper. A more pressing object, which cannot be put on paper is to avail ourselves of the emperors marked dispositions of friendly regard for us whenever a treaty of peace shall be on the tapis, & to engage him to patronize our interests there, so as that the benefit of the maritime rights which shall then be settled, may be attended to us & nothing plotted to sacrifice us by France or England, neither of which wish us success, but it is now too late to see you. While your instructions are in preparation, we have advertised the sailing of an Airso on the 15th of Sep. from Philadelphia, and by a letter of the 26th from hence, Mr. Gallatin was desired to instruct the Collector of Philadelphia to engage one there. The only persons who know of your mission are the heads of departments & Mr. Graham, chief clerk of the department of state. With any of these whom you meet you may speak safely on the subject. It would have been very desirable that you

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should have read our Russian correspondence, but this appears impracticable without making your mission public.

I send you the emperor's letters* to me, which be pleased to return after perusal, but mine to him are at Washington, not to be got at in my absence. They would have been more important to give you a view of what has passed. I believe Mr. Levitt Harris has copies of them. Our correspondence was produced in this way. The Emperor from a disinterested & virtuous regard to this country expressed a wish to correspond with me, which was communicated to me through a fourth person, but afterwards a letter of his was shewn me expressing the same wish. I took the occasion there of this generous & voluntary interposition in the case of the capture of the Philadelphia & her crew to begin the correspondence, which has been more in a private than a public style.

I expect to recieve a letter for you from Price in time to inclose it in this package. I have written so lately to my friends in France that I have no letters to trouble you with. I have written two to M. LaFayette on his affairs here, & have nothing new to add to them. I have pressed him to borrow money in Europe to pay his debts on a hypothecation of his Orlean's lands for 10 years, at the end of which time they will sell for 8 times what they will now. Still however remember me to all those their nomination with who I am intimate. They are all well known to you; and wishing you safety, health & success I repeat the assurances of my constant affection & respect. Th. Jefferson

Editor's Note: Added in the hand of W. Short: *These wee dated No. 7 1804-in answer to one of June 15, 1804 & Aug. 10. 1806 in acknowledgement of one (date not mentioned) sent by Mr. Harris with books on the American constitution-note of W.S.

FC (Jefferson Papers, DLC)